

# CINEMA STUDIES

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## CONTENTS

### EDITORIAL

EARLY FILM CRITICISM IN LEICESTER

by David R. Williams

REX INGRAM AND THE NICE STUDIOS

by Liam O'Laoghaire

### DIGEST OF PERIODICAL ARTICLES

### BOOK REVIEWS

Matthew Josephson : *Edison*

by Brian Coe

Bernard Chardère (ed.) : *Premier Plan*

by Tom Milne

Renzo Renzi (ed.) : *Dal Soggetto al Film*

by Eric Rhode

Ernest Lindgren : *A Picture History of the Cinema*

by N.M.H.

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# CINEMA STUDIES

*Editors :*

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## EDITORIAL

One more film pioneer has now left us. Mr. Arthur Melbourne-Cooper, a prolific producer of films before the Great War and an early experimenter with animated cartoons and puppet films, died last October.

It is important that we should realise the urgency of the need for adequate studies while the eye-witnesses are still here of the first twenty years of the cinema in England, a period when the British film was at the height of its power and which, in spite of Rachael Low's basic survey, is still sadly under-documented. This applies especially to the organisation of the trade. It is frequently stated that the early showmen stumped the fairgrounds with their films before the picture palaces appeared. But little or nothing has been published to give any idea what the fairs were like, how the film shows fitted in with the other entertainments, what sort of response they had from the fair-going public, indeed what proportion of film exhibition took place in the fairs, and when. Even more important is it to know exactly what influence the very highly developed techniques of the magic lantern projectionists had on the methods of production and exhibition of early films.

Later generations can see the films themselves (at least those that have survived, and so long as archive facilities can be made available) and speculate about the influences exerted upon their making. But in spite of failing memories, the showmen and film-makers themselves can still provide information which is unobtainable in any other way. They can tell of their colleagues, of the reasons why they did this or this, of the effect that some technical or trade development had upon them. Several have written volumes of memoirs, but almost invariably they are anecdotic. These are useful, of course, but they need to be supplemented by the probing questions of the historian.

But time is short. Already the ranks are thinned, and every year the scholar's work becomes more difficult. As if to emphasise this, a little booklet has just been published by the Nederlands Film-museum which is devoted to five of the Dutch pioneer showmen.

The only way to burrow beneath the "recital of facts" type of history is to take a limited theme, or better still a person, and write with constant reference to that theme. Thereby a picture can gradually be built up of the background, which will be further clarified by another overlapping study, and so on. To understand the early days of the cinema we need to know more about the men who made it.

The new biography of Edison gives great insight into the very beginnings of the cinema although it only devotes a few pages to the invention of the kinetoscope. But it is not necessary to deal only with the great ones. The ordinary run-of-the-mill exhibitor is just as important, if only because he is more typical. But it is not enough to say that because one writer has covered the period there is nothing further to be done. The subject is more complex than that, especially when an embryo art form is involved which is to become one of the major cultural influences of the century.

We still have the fortunate opportunity to learn from those who made the history. Let us not throw it away!

## EARLY FILM CRITICISM IN LEICESTER

By DAVID R. WILLIAMS

Serious film criticism is said to have begun sometime during the 1920's, but, before this date, a lay-form of criticism was certainly in existence. Whilst revising my study of the Cinema in Leicester, therefore, I noted some examples of a critical approach to early films and film exhibitions.

Quite obviously, the earliest reports of the Cinematograph were mere explanations of the "new marvel." Since some of the exhibitions of the animated pictures which were reviewed took place at the Opera House and the Theatre Royal, the task of describing them was left to the Drama critics of the local papers.

"A great source of attraction," wrote the critic of the *Leicester Journal* on December 25th, 1896, "is R. W. Paul's 'Animatographe,' which by some ingenious contrivance shows animated photographs, and scenes such as Blackfriars Bridge, the arrest of a bookmaker, conjuring, Brighton Beach, the Derby of 1896, and sea-bathing are displayed, so-to-speak, to the very life. It is generally conceded that the animatographe, which superseded the old transformation scene, is the great wonder of the pantomime."

The critic of *The Leicester Daily Post*, whilst agreeing with his contemporary in the first instance, was later highly critical of the machinery used at the Tivoli, a local Music Hall.

"Dr. Bertino's pictures were all good ones, but they are all spoiled to a certain extent by the excessive vibrations. That, however, seems to be the fault, more or less, of all animatographs."<sup>1</sup>

As the projectors improved, so did this gentleman's opinion of them, until, by April 1898, he was hailing the American Biograph as "the perfection of animated photography, the many and varied scenes thrown upon the screen being steady, clear and precise. The enthusiasm and unstified joy with which the youngsters received the various pictures at the first house last evening, was a genuine tribute to the sterling qualities of the entertainment presented."<sup>2</sup>

The reviews of the programmes of which the films formed a part, appeared the day after the first showing in Leicester in the case of the *Daily Post* and the Friday after in the case of the weekly *Journal*. Except where the programme was retained for a further week, there-

1 *Leicester Daily Post*, February 2nd, 1897.

2 *L.D.P.*, April 19th, 1898.



fore, the criticisms would have given little advance publicity for the performances.

Travelling shows afforded many people a chance to see the cinematograph, and such spectacles as Poole's Myriorama and Dyson's Diorama were regular visitors to local exhibition halls. "The living pictures have hosts of admirers,"<sup>3</sup> wrote the critic after one visit in 1899, and, here, he was referring to the film performance, and not merely to the animated canvasses which were such a feature of these shows.

The enterprise of the Wests, father and son, in collecting together a number of naval films and presenting them as "Our Navy," was rewarded with high praise by the local critic in April 1899. Though his report was little more than a list of the items included, an appreciation of the young art of cinema was inherent in his description of the new turbine boat. "The photographs taken on the stern of the 'Turbinia,' showing the water swirling away in the wake in beautiful curves, are of great beauty. . . . This unique entertainment undoubtedly has a great future in it."<sup>4</sup>

His appreciation was further evidenced the next year, when, in describing the Bioscope section of the Tivoli programme, he said that, "besides the usual views were shown some altogether original pictures doing great credit to the mind of the man who evolved them."<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, no other details were included and it has not therefore been possible to trace their origin.

The first "long" review of an individual item did not occur until as late as 1902, when George Méliès' *A Trip to the Moon* was shown. "The improvement made in the bioscope since its introduction is exemplified by a humorous series of pictures giving a comic illustration of a trip to the moon, in which the delegates of the scientific congress at the Astronomic Club set off on a visit to the 'fair orb of night.' They are sent from the Earth in a projectile fired from an enormous cannon, and go through numerous strange adventures on the moon."<sup>6</sup>

Though story and comedy films made an increasing appearance at the halls and in the travelling shows, little attention was paid to the story-line or content until *Robbing the Mail* appeared in 1904. From the long description, it is obvious that here shown was Porter's *Great Train Robbery*. The critic, though commenting upon the length of time it took to enact all the scenes, made no mention of the method by which the story was told, or of the excitement of the cross-cutting at the end. The comment in 1905, on *Rescued by Rover*, however, suggested that this was "a charming subject, absolutely new in conception and realization."<sup>7</sup>

Though the word 'film' was in common usage in criticism from 1902 onwards, it was only as a synonym for 'animated photograph.' There was nothing in the reports to suggest that film was a new art form, and its main importance was considered to be as a newsreel of current events. It was these events which appeared highest on the advertised programme, and these events which were reviewed first. Some films shown were briefly praised for their possible

3 L.D.P., April 11th, 1899.

4 L.D.P., April 18th, 1899.

5 L.D.P., October 1st, 1900.

6 L.D.P., October 28th, 1902.

7 L.D.P., November 28th, 1905.

salutory effect ; i.e., *Every Cloud has a Silver Lining*, 1905, "a too-common life story with a moral, which cannot fail to appeal to all who would give every man a chance to earn an honest livelihood."<sup>8</sup>

Any new cinematographic novelty such as the Chronomegaphone, Micro-photography, or Colour-photography, was reported at great length, but each was considered only as a novelty and not as a permanent feature of the filmic scene. The expense of certain films and the realistic production of others impressed the reviewers more. The early Italian spectacles such as *Nero at the Burning of Rome* and *The Fall of Troy* (1910) were praised for their artistic beauty and skilful staging. The Shakespearian films of Sir Beerbohm Tree and Violet Vanbrugh were applauded as being "the triumph of Kinematographic Art."<sup>9</sup>, when they were merely photographed stage performances. Of much more importance is a review of a film called *The Test of Love*, "an emotional story of a blind woman. Each of the actors in the piece perform their parts admirably, the articulation of the words being so apparent from the motion of the lips that the story could be followed by reading the conversation."<sup>10</sup>

During 1911, the film reviews had been moved from under the heading, 'Drama, Music and Art' in the *Daily Post* to a special section called 'Cinematograph Entertainments.' By this time there were nine Picture Theatres showing films exclusively, and three Music Halls with a part-film programme. In their new section, the film reviews were much more lengthy, and the reviewers seemed to acquire a more permanent style of criticism. They began to notice the "skill of the stage-manager" in the battle scenes, and the "ingenious trick photography" of such films as *The Crusaders* and *Ulysses* (1911).

By 1912, some of the story films were being reviewed in similar manner to the Drama reviews on the same page. "Lovers of Dickens will not be satisfied with the film of his characters presented at the Floral Hall this week. . . . Perhaps the part of Dickens, himself, is overacted."<sup>11</sup>

The popularity of the cinema was enough established for the critics to refer to a Max Linder picture in the same way that they referred to a Chaplin picture in later years, ". . . a description of which is unnecessary."<sup>12</sup>

The cinema had become crystallised into a popular art and the local reviewers were defending it against attacks by the followers of 'legitimate theatre.'

"Some time ago, a well-known London Journal gave prominence to an article written against the picture theatre by a notable stage manager. In his argument, he said that the cinema was of a mechanical and unnatural order, and that there was rarely any applause from the audience. In a word, he said, that the cinema was only on sufferance as a mechanical substitute for the legitimate theatre. Visit the Floral Hall. No appreciation! No applause! Last night round upon round of appreciation was elicited from a delighted audience."<sup>13</sup>

8 *L.D.P.*, January 22nd, 1905.

9 *L.D.P.*, March 24th, 1911.

10 *L.D.P.*, May 23rd, 1911.

11 *L.D.P.*, February 6th, 1912, *Leaves from the Books of Dickens*.

12 *L.D.P.*, May 28th, 1912.

13 *L.D.P.*, June 20th, 1911.



To end this short study of early film criticism and review, let me quote from a long article by the *Daily Post* reviewer on the pleasures of cinema going.

"On previous occasions, one has reflected upon the types of films shown at the Picture House. One has referred to this and to that feature of the programme. The educational picture, the dramatic film, the amusing, have each been detailed as one week's programme has given place to that of another. One has perhaps fallen into error, or, if not that, a shortcoming, when he has been recommended to see a certain travel film because it will interest, to see a certain comic film because it will amuse, or to see a certain pretty picture because it will charm. This has been a shortcoming. For it has not conveyed what the Picture House is. One sometimes feels that here is not a mere cinematograph theatre where one can see bioscope films. It is not that. It is not a rendezvous. It is an entertainment, in the pure meaning of the word.

"Take a comfortable theatre, provide it with an excellent series of pictures containing all sorts of ingredients, with a strong sprinkling of the amusing, add to this delightful music (and the way that the music always 'fits in' is notable), then add to this an indescribable restful repose and you have the Picture House atmosphere."<sup>14</sup>

It may have been this sort of publicity for the cinema which today has left Leicester without any professional theatre at all.

14 *L.D.P.*, June 11th, 1912.

## REX INGRAM AND THE NICE STUDIOS

By LIAM O'LAOGHAIRE\*

In a very remarkable career Rex Ingram, the famous director of *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, achieved nothing so remarkable, perhaps, as his foundation of the Film Studios at Nice. It was here that he became practically complete master of his craft and dominated altogether the work he undertook.

His ideas as regards the film as an art were progressive. He was a dreamer and an idealist and, as far as his ideals were concerned, practical. That is not to say that his ideas were welcomed or that in a medium turned sour there was much place for him. But at least he did achieve for a brief period the freedom which he sought, and his work was done in an atmosphere which did not diminish him as a man. That the whole tide of events was against him made no matter. He was a romantic in a world which had little place for romance. Paradoxically he was a realist in a way which was only later to be fully appreciated.

Ingram had come to films the hard way. He had learnt the job from the bottom up. Script-writer, actor, designer and producer, he had tried them all until, at the youthful age of 23, he directed his own script for Universal. A series of highly coloured melodramas, given vitality and interest because of his realistic use of setting and typing, were to serve as an apprenticeship for the day he would leap to fame with *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* in 1921.

\* Acquisitions Officer to the National Film Archive.

In Hollywood he moved aloof from the industry and dreamed of the film as an art. There was much he lacked in his talent and personality, but at least in this he was faithful to his medium—that he brought an artist's instinct to the creation of images and a human understanding to the manipulation of actors. It could be said of him with Cyrano :

"I am too proud to be a parasite,  
And if my nature wants the germ that grows  
Towering to heaven like the mountain pine  
Or like the oak, sheltering multitudes,  
I stand not high it may be—but alone."

Following on the success of the Ibanez story, Ingram made a series of more or less popular films. The fabulous Valentino was replaced by the less mythical Novarro, and in *Scaramouche*, premiered at Washington on the 15th September 1923, a new major hit was registered.

But there were difficulties. The day of the absolute film-maker was passing. The grip of the money-men was getting tighter on the creative side of the industry. There was also a personal disappointment. For many years Ingram had dreamed of making *Ben Hur*. It looked as if he might get the assignment from M.G.M. This failed to materialise.

Apart from such factors it was well known that Ingram had theories that films should be made on the actual location demanded by the story. He had long admired many of the European productions whose strength he felt lay in their absolute fidelity to their settings. He had many projects which he wanted to film, e.g., Hugo's *Toilers of the Sea* and Wasserman's *Christian Wahnschaffe*. He did not feel any great sympathy with the Hollywood way of life and he was rather a Bohemian cut off from his kingdom.

With Ingram I feel the motivation for his actions may often be found in the dreams of adolescence. Obviously France interested him though he had never been there. Could it be linked with his boyish fascination with Dicken's *Tale of Two Cities* read in an Irish Rectory? The Paris of *The Four Horsemen* and *Scaramouche* has an authentic ring. The little French town of his version of *Eugenie Grandet* (*The Conquering Power*) is touched with a loving imagination. We know he made the actors for the latter two films speak all their unheard dialogue in French. We also know that he was first attracted to films by seeing the old Vitagraph version of *A Tale of Two Cities* way back in 1911.

However the chance to get away from Hollywood came in quite another way. In early 1924 he was in Tunisia filming the second version of *The Arab* with his wife, Alice Terry, and Ramon Novarro in the leads. Ingram was a voracious reader and when he became interested in a subject he did not stop until he could claim to be some authority on it. This was no doubt his inheritance from his father, a distinguished Irish ecclesiastical scholar. He found much to fascinate him in the Arab life he saw about him. The vigorous nomadic life in the open appealed to him as being the antithesis of the artificial life of Hollywood with its hothouse atmosphere, its small-town mentality and its declining vitality. Ingram was a fine horseman and could handle an Arab steed with the confidence of a native. He made friends with the Arabs, learnt their language and absorbed their customs. The cultures of the Mediterranean fascinated him.



With the completion of *The Arab* he chose for his next subject another Ibanez novel, *Mare Nostrum*, surely a significant title. This was the story of a captain of a small Spanish trading vessel who falls under the spell of a glamorous woman employed as a German Agent. He helps the German submarines in the Mediterranean to re-fuel but turns savagely against his enchantress and the Germans when his son is the victim of German torpedoes. The woman is captured and shot by the French as a spy and the captain meets his death destroying the German submarine that killed his son.

For this film Ingram decided that the film must be entirely made on and around the Mediterranean. For his base he chose Nice which was centrally situated between Spain and Italy where scenes were to be shot. Nice had already had a tradition of film-making which went back to the happy slapstick days of Jean Durand. With carefully laid plans Ingram took over an old studio in the Western suburb of Nice at St. Augustine du Var and proceeded to equip it in order that the interior scenes for *Mare Nostrum* could be filmed there. Louis B. Mayer, no friend of Ingram's, was in charge of the production, at least financially.

Ingram so managed the affair that in addition to his salary for the film (which incidentally was no mean sum) he found himself master of a studio where he could make his films to his own liking and fulfil his contract with M.G.M.

It should be stated here that after the phenomenal success of *The Four Horsemen* Ingram received a contract from M.G.M. which gave him carte blanche as far as making films was concerned. After all, he had saved the tottering Metro organisation, salvaged Marcus Loew's investment and might almost be regarded as the man who made the famous amalgamation possible.

The scale of operations was far-flung and intense during the making of *Mare Nostrum*. About February of 1924 the submarine scenes were shot at Toulon and Villefranche. The part of the Submarine Commander was played by the Russian, Andrews Englemann, a bald-headed villain of truly frightening proportions. For the Spanish Captain, Ingram used his old colleague of Vitagraph days, Antonio Moreno, an actor he had long wanted to direct. In April, Ingram's beautiful wife and star of most of his films, Alice Terry, came over from Hollywood to play the femme fatale, Freya, symbolically conceived in the film as a reincarnation of Amphitrite.

By the end of November in the same year *Mare Nostrum* was almost complete. It had its première in New York on 15th February 1926.

Into this film Ingram poured all his technical skill, all his passion for this new world he had discovered. The most complicated set-ups were used, the most intense demands made on the actors. No expense or trouble was spared in choice of locations. The film according to Ingram cost £120,000 and had taken in a year some £400,000.

Cedric Belfrage writing in *Picturegoer* about it said: "It is a very remarkable production with which there can be no doubt that Ingram makes an artistic comeback if not a commercial one . . . leaves the spectator with much the same mixed feelings as Stroheim's *Greed*. The photography of *Mare Nostrum* is exquisite and the acting brilliant, Antonio Moreno especially revealing an undreamt-of dramatic ability." Ingram, however, faced criticism in certain quarters. James Quirke of *Photoplay* and Louella Parsons developed

acute attacks of local patriotism, remembering Ingram's critical comments on the Hollywood scene.

The work at the studio was very complicated at times and was often carried out at night because the heat of the sun on the glass buildings made daylight shooting impossible while at night there was often intense cold. It also took some time to build up confidence in the people of Nice that this was no fly-by-night operation and so to pave the way for co-operation from shops in the provision of props and furnishings for the sets. However, as the making of *Mare Nostrum* proceeded, the site was being developed as a studio of first-class capabilities and, soon after, the second production of Somerset Maugham's *Magician* was completed in July 1926.

This film had a most interesting cast. There was the Serbian, Ivan Petrovitch, Firmin Gémier of the Comédie Française, Alice Terry, Stowitts the American dancer and in the lead the German Paul Wegener. Ingram had long admired Wegener and invited him to come to Hollywood but Wegener contented himself with a promise to act in any film Ingram might like to make in Europe. In this story, vaguely inspired by the life of Aleistair Crowley, Ingram made a full-blooded horror film mainly remarkable for its fantasy and magical hocus-pocus. This was the last Ingram film to be photographed by John Seitz his faithful collaborator since the *Four Horsemen* days.

It may be interesting at this stage to note some of the people who worked with Ingram at Nice. His Production Manager was Harry Lachman, an American painter in Paris who had turned photographer and who was later to branch out as a director on his own in London and Hollywood. His legal adviser was Edouard Corniglion-Molinier later to achieve fame as a General in de Gaulle's Free French Forces and as a Senator in France. When John Seitz departed along with Willis Goldbeck, Ingram's script-writer discovery, Lee Garmes came over from Hollywood to photograph Ingram's third Nice production. This was *The Garden of Allah*. A young man breaking into films as a still cameraman might also be mentioned as he was later to make the grade as a director. This was Michael Powell.

For Ingram's two last productions the cameraman was L. H. Burel who had worked with Gance and Feyder and who today is cameraman to Robert Bresson.

*The Garden of Allah* was begun in 1927 and marked the end of Ingram's career under the M.G.M. banner. Again Petrovitch and Alice Terry starred and Ingram's intimate knowledge of Arab life and customs was used to good effect. It was partly shot in Tunisia where Ingram had become a personal friend of the Bey of Tunis, who conferred the order of Niftan Ichikar on him. It should be noted that the French Government had in August of 1926 made him a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour.

Pictorially *The Garden of Allah* was most striking with fine performances from Alice Terry and Ivan Petrovitch. Certainly Robert Hitchens himself preferred this film version of his novel to the later Dietrich-Boyer version.

About this period difficulties began. His contract with M.G.M. expired in December 1927 and was not renewed. Louis B. Mayer and his protégé Irving Thalberg were tightening the reins, and conformity became the order of the day. Ingram quarrelled with Harry Lachman, and many of his technicians departed.



St. Augustine du Var was now a sizable well-organised property. It had been built around the Villa Massena where Ingram lived and had his sculptor's studio. Sculpture had always been one of his great passions and he had worked as assistant to Lee Lawrie when a student at Yale. By this time Ingram had become a legend—a film director with his own workshop. His eccentric personal habits added to the myth. While he met nearly everyone of importance who came to Nice he was something of a recluse himself and avoided the social round. He was fond of bathing and spent regular hours each day on the Grande Bleue where his handsome looks attracted the inevitable bevy of female admirers. His beach activities however proved to have their utilitarian aspects since he rescued at least two people from drowning.

Ingram while Bohemian in his attire—he usually went about in an old khaki shirt and army trousers—was fastidious in his tastes. He had a magnificent collection of paintings, many by Dinet, of whom he was an admirer, as well as exotic Arab objets d'art. He did not frequent society functions and it was torture for him to get into evening clothes. He went about in his car and tried to avoid the notice of publicity hounds or screen-struck damsels. When cornered he was capable of spinning the most fantastic yarns about his life and interests. He was at one time surrounded by the impedimenta of his North African films in the shape of numerous Arabs and particularly of the dwarf Shorty who was his Court Jester and had apparently fulfilled this rôle for the Bey of Tunis.

There were many rumours at the time that Ingram had become a Mohammedan and had embraced the faith of Islam. This was the subject of a lawsuit with an English journal and it was strenuously denied by Ingram. The making of *Baroud* in 1931 revived the rumour and in fact it seemed to issue from his publicity man at the time, though again there seems to be little evidence that it was so.

Ingram's magnificent isolation and independence at his studio aroused the curiosity of the Hollywood folk coming to Europe and indeed of practically every celebrity visiting the Riviera. The list of distinguished callers included such names as Shaw, Galsworthy, Barrie, the Scott Fitzgeralds, Frank Harris, Isadora Duncan, Henri Matisse, Douglas Fairbanks, King Vidor, Mary Garden and of course the authors Maugham, Hitchens and Cosmo Hamilton whose stories he filmed. For good measure there were crowned heads of Europe and near-Royalty.

There was a long gap between *Garden of Allah* and Ingram's next film which was *Three Passions* by Cosmo Hamilton. In between, the studios were leased to other producers. For this film Ingram had the Terry-Petrovitch team once more, as well as Shayle Gardner and the incomparable Claire Eames. The story touched on the conflict between Capital and Labour and between the World, the Flesh and Religion. The shipyard scenes were very well done and the film had notable moments. The camerawork was by Burel.

Again two years were to elapse before Ingram tackled another film. This was an original story concocted by himself and Benno Vignay who was later to provide von Sternberg with *Morocco*. The film was called *Baroud* and dealt with tribal warfare in the Atlas Mountains.

Shooting proceeded on this complicated film in 1931. The film suffered in many ways and failed to be a success. First Ingram chose to play the lead, leaving Alice Terry to undertake co-direction.

It was his first sound-film and called for quite difficult effects in a sound-film of that time. Add to the difficulties that the cast was the most extraordinary cosmopolitan collection ranging from Russians, Italians, French, British and Cubans to American Negroes and North African Arabs. The film was made in French and English versions.

While *Baroud* was a straightforward adventure story with the most self-conscious and unilluminating dialogue, pictorially it showed that Ingram had not lost his art of putting on the screen exciting and beautiful pictures. The backgrounds and detail of the film suggest that it was filmed on the spot in North Africa whereas, in actual fact, it was made in the Nice studios and in the hills around Nice. This in itself showed Ingram's uncanny flair for authenticity and there was not a costume, prop or makeup that did not first pass his eye for approval.

The finances of the film were another problem he had to face and there was much to do to provide the necessary cash to complete it. As background to all this, the fate of the studios was hanging in the balance. Ingram was forced to sell out and a most unpleasant and long drawn-out lawsuit arose between himself and Corniglion Molinier whom he accused of sharp practice in the sale. Ingram ultimately lost his case. The studios had changed hands. He left Nice with his wife Alice Terry and a phase of his work had ended, the last phase of his work as a film-maker. He went to live in Egypt and North Africa and later returned to his ranch in Hollywood where he died in 1950. He was 39 when he left Nice.

Ingram was a complex, erratic personality, presenting different aspects of his character to different people. He believed in himself, could be as arrogant as the devil. He could be both gentle and cruel. He met the great as equals, despised throngs but was the soul of kindness to his friends. He was equally implacable as an enemy.

His beautiful, good-humoured and charming wife, Alice Terry, was entirely devoted to him though at various times and places they went their own way. He valued her advice and often deferred to it. Her pleasant easy-going attitude to life helped him enormously and she had a fund of common-sense and understanding only too often lacking in actresses. Her personal success did not matter a great deal and she was quite content to leave the world of the cinema with all its fame and glamour. When he died she was at his bedside and could look back on a wonderful life with him from the time he first encouraged her to continue as a screen actress in 1920.

There was always a boyish quality about him. A sense of fun was always behind the intensity with which he hurled himself into his work. Vast research and reading always preceded a production. The visual effect was always uppermost in his mind. When it came to actors he had to know his people or else find new ones. He avoided the stereotype but used the same people again and again for the qualities he knew he could evoke in them, the unknown qualities which they often failed to recognise in themselves.

Today the studios at St. Augustine du Var are known as the Victorine Studios from which have come many famous French films. Ingram is remembered by many of the people there and people who worked with him are scattered across the world, some still in films and others perforce or by choice in other occupations. The cinema of their memories is different from that of today. It



was always a struggle, but then there was hope and perhaps values worth hoping about.

Much has been said about Ingrma's departure from the film scene. It was said for instance that the soft life of the Riviera weakened his will to go on. That may be. He was also, however, an intelligent man and saw how things were going in the movie world. He did want to make more films but not so strongly that he was prepared to pay an unwilling price. He valued his artist's freedom. After all he was a sculptor too and in this medium he continued to find satisfaction. He found the world exciting to look at. He travelled and wrote and admired the beautiful things he collected. In many ways he was a complete man.

## DIGEST OF PERIODICAL ARTICLES

This is a list, continued from that started on page 54 of the last issue, of some useful articles which have appeared in periodicals since the beginning of the year. The entries are simply divided into three categories as follows:

### A. Individuals

DREYER, Carl Th.

*Ecrits I* by Carl Dreyer,  
in "Cahiers du Cinéma" (Paris) Vol. XXI No. 124 (October 1961) pp. 23-35.

A French translation of the first four articles (written by Dreyer in 1920, 1922, 1926 and 1929) contained in the anthology of his writings "Om Filmen" (reviewed on p.41 of "Cinema Studies").

EISENSTEIN, Sergei Mihailovich

*Eisenstein über die Farbe im Film II* by L. Koslow,  
in "Film-wissenschaftlichen Mitteilungen" (Berlin) (a periodical supplement to "Deutsche Filmkunst") Vol. II No. 2 (July 1961) pp. 39-42.

FEUILLADE, Louis

*Un inconnu nommé Feuillade* by Francis Lacassin,  
in "Cinéma 61" (Paris) No. 55 (April 1961) pp. 78-90.

*La vie horrible et magnifique de Fantômas* by Francis Lacassin,  
in "Cinéma 61" (Paris) No. 56 (May 1961) pp. 76-89.

*Judex* by Francis Lacassin,  
in "Cinéma 61" (Paris) No. 57 (June 1961) pp. 66-77.

*Musidora et les quarante voleurs* by Francis Lacassin and Raymond Belloux,  
in "Cinéma 61" (Paris) No. 58 (July 1961) pp. 79-89.

These four articles are extracts from Lacassin's forthcoming book on Louis Feuillade to be published in Paris early in 1962.

**FITZGERALD, Francis Scott**

*Fitzgerald e il cinema italiano contemporaneo* by Franco Valobra,  
in "Centrofilm" (Turin) No. 22-23 (June-July 1961) pp. 3-47.

**KEATON, Buster**

*Great films of the century—No. 14: The General* by Philip Strick,  
in "Films and Filming" (London) Vol. VII No. 12 (September  
1961) pp. 14-16, 40-41.

Half the article is about *The General*, the remainder a historical  
account of Keaton. Contains a bibliography.

**LE PRINCE, Louis Aimé Augustin**

*Louis Aimé Augustin Le Prince—der vater der Kinemato-  
graphie?* by Hans Köcke,  
in "Bild und Ton" (Berlin) Year 14 No. 7 (July 1961) pp.  
222-227.

**MAMOULIAN, Rouben**

*Painting the leaves black: an interview with Rouben Mamoulian*  
by David Robinson,  
in "Sight and Sound" (London) Vol. 30 No. 3 (Summer 1961)  
pp. 123-127.

**MELVILLE, Jean-Pierre**

*Entretien avec Jean-Pierre Melville* by Claude Beylie and Bertrand  
Tavernier,  
in "Cahiers du Cinéma" (Paris) Vol. XXI No. 124 (October  
1961) pp. 1-22.

**STEINER, Max**

*Max Steiner, has scored more movies than any composer is ever  
likely to again* by George Raborn,  
in "Films in Review" (New York) Vol. XII No. 6 (June-July  
1961) pp. 338-351.

**URUSEVSKY, Sergei**

*Tvorcheskie poiski Sergeya Urusevskogo* by L. Dyko,  
in "Iskusstvo Kino" (Moscow) (July 1961) pp. 102-112.

The creative search of Sergei Urusevsky.

**B. Countries**

**ARGENTINA**

*Para una historia de cine argentino* by Jorge Miguel Conselo,  
in "Film Ideal" (Madrid) No. 69/70 (1961) pp. 8-16.

A summary chronology of the history of the Argentine cinema.

**GERMANY**

*Forbidden fruit: the harvest of the German cinema, 1939-1945*  
by David Stewart Hull,  
in "Film Quarterly" (Berkeley, Calif.) Vol. XIV No. 4 (Summer  
1961) pp. 16-30.



## HOLLAND

*Bio Pioniers* by C. Boost,

Amsterdam : Nederlands Filmmuseum, 1961, 20 pp.

A booklet published under the auspices of the Internationale Filmweek, Arnhem (5-10 June 1961) describing the careers of five Dutch film pioneer showmen—George Slieker, Willy and Albert Mullens, Jean Desmet and Carlos Rizzo.

## RUSSIA

*Il metodo teatrale alle origini del cinema sovietico* by Leonardo Autera,  
in "Bianco e Nero" (Rome) Vol. XXII No. 2-3 (February-March 1961) pp. 13-32.

## C. Subjects

### CENSORSHIP

*La censura cinematografica : idee, esperienze, documenti.*  
Special issue of "Bianco e Nero" (Rome) Vol. XXII No. 4-5 (April-May 1961) 171 pp.

*La censure contre le cinéma.*  
Special issue of "Image et Son" (Paris) No. 140-141 (April-May 1961) pp. 1-32.

### CHURCH

*Lettre des évêques italiens sur la moralité du spectacle cinématographique.*  
in "Revue Internationale du Cinéma" (Brussels) No. 51 (25 April 1961) pp. 14-16.

### COMEDY

*Autopsie du gag.—IV. Le gag, moyen d'expression* by François Mars,  
in "Cahiers du Cinéma" (Paris) No. 121 (July 1961) pp. 32-40.  
*Satire und film* by Georg Honigman,  
in "Deutsche Filmkunst" (Berlin) 1961 No. 7 pp. 242-246.

### HISTORY

*Histoire du cinéma en 120 films* by Marcel Martin,  
in "Cinéma 61" (Paris) in several parts :  
No. 55 (April 1961) pp. 67-77 [1895-1915]  
No. 56 (May 1961) pp. 65-75 [1916-1924]  
No. 57 (June 1961) pp. 55-65 [1925-1927]  
No. 58 (July 1961) pp. 58-68 [1927-1929]  
No. 59 (August-September 1961) pp. 97-107 [1929-1931]

### NEGRO

*The new Negro on the screen* by Martin S. Dworkin,  
in "The Progressive" (New York) in five parts :  
Vol. 24 No. 10 (October 1960) pp. 39-41  
Vol. 24 No. 11 (November 1960) pp. 33-36

Vol. 24 No. 12 (December 1960) pp. 34-36

Vol. 25 No. 1 (January 1961) pp. 36-38

Vol. 25 No. 2 (February 1961) pp. 38-41

A survey of the treatment of the negro on the screen (mainly in the American cinema) with especial emphasis on the fifties.

## POLITICS

*Il cortometraggio italiano antifascista* by Carlo di Carlo.

Special issue of "Centrofilm" (Turin) No. 24-26 (August-October 1961) 120 pp.

*The Great Dictator: satira esemplare del nazismo* by Fernaldo di Giamatteo,

in "Bianco e Nero" (Rome) anno 22 No. 6 (June 1961) pp. 1-32.

## REALITY

*La représentation de la Réalité économique et sociale au cinéma* by J. Durand,

in "Revue Internationale de Filmologie" (Paris) Vol. XI No. 36/37 (January-June 1961) pp. 21-32.

## SCHOLARSHIP AND ARCHIVES

*An American Film Institute: a proposal* by Colin Young,

in "Film Quarterly" (Berkeley, Calif.) Vol. XIV No. 4 (Summer 1961) pp. 37-50.

*The study of the film* by Thorold Dickinson,

in "Screen Education Year Book 1962" (London) pp. 15-18.

An exposé of what the author is attempting to do during his tenure of a lectureship in the film at the Slade School of Fine Art.

## WESTERN

*Mitología y evolución del Western* by Felix Martialay.

in "Film Ideal" (Madrid) No. 63 (15 January 1961) pp. 14-20.

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Edison* by Matthew Josephson. London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1961. 511 pp. plus 16 pp. illustrations. 42s.

Thomas Alva Edison (born 1847, died 1931) was unquestionably one of the most important figures in the development of cinematography. The commercial introduction of the Kinetoscope was the turning point in the beginnings of the cinema.

Born the son of a timber dealer, of mixed Dutch and English ancestry, Edison grew up in a vigorously expanding society, where invention had become "a national habit." His formal education was limited to three months in a one-room school, where he had difficulty in absorbing the lessons. His mother taught him reading, writing and arithmetic, and, more important, encouraged his interest in science and mechanics. Edison said, "my mother was the making of me, she understood me; she let me follow my bent." By the age



of 10, his bedroom was full of chemicals and scraps of metal and wire. When 11 years old, his interest in the new science of telegraphy led him to make his own telegraph outfit, and he was soon keen to own a proper set. In 1859 the railway came to his town, and Edison, at the age of 12, got his first job—as newsboy and candy seller on the return trip from Port Huron to Detroit. After working at this for a year, Edison persuaded the trainman to let him set up his home laboratory in the corner of the baggage car and continue his experiments. It was at this time that the deafness which was to remain with him for the rest of his life appeared. Despite this, his interest in telegraphy increased and in the Summer of 1862 Edison had the chance to learn to become a telegraph operator. For the next few years he became an itinerant telegrapher. His experimental work continued, and he became particularly interested in devising a system for multiplex telegraphy. Early in 1869, his liking for practical jokes, which had brought him trouble before, resulted in his dismissal from a job as telegrapher. He announced that he “would hereafter devote his full time to bringing out his inventions.” By 1871, the young free-lance inventor had established a manufacturing shop in Newark, New Jersey, where he had engaged a staff of mechanics to make stock market printers for him. It was in this year that he began to keep the detailed laboratory notebooks which were to provide records of all his experiments in the years that followed. From this workshop came a steady stream of devices, including, for the first time, a practical quadruplex telegraphic system.

In 1876, he set up a laboratory in Menlo Park, New Jersey, as a “factory” for inventions. This was to be his greatest single invention—a research team organized towards practical inventions of any kind. Between 1877 and 1887 there came from this laboratory the carbon microphone which turned Bell’s telephone into a practical system of communication, the phonograph, the first *practical* electric lighting system using incandescent lamps, the first full-scale electric locomotive in America and many other inventions. By 1887, Edison had built a larger laboratory at West Orange. It was here that the development of the Kinetograph camera and Kinetoscope viewer took place, between 1887 and 1890. Muybridge, the chronophotographer, met Edison in 1886. Edison, as a result, became interested in the problems of recording movement photographically. When the West Orange laboratory was built, he discussed the problems of making an optical equivalent of the phonograph with W. K. L. Dickson, the young Scotsman who had joined Edison’s organization some years before. In 1888 Dickson worked on methods of obtaining a series of small pictures on dry plates. Edison’s Caveat No. 110, of October 8th 1888, and filed at the United States Patent Office, shows that at that stage he was considering a series of pictures arranged around a cylinder, or in a spiral upon a glass plate. In the Caveat he said “a continuous strip could be used, but there are many mechanical difficulties in the way.” Early in 1889 he obtained supplies of coated celluloid film from Carbutt of New York. These sheets were wrapped around the cylinder of the prototype camera and used to take series of pictures up to five seconds in length. In the late spring of this year, Edison and Dickson decided that a strip of film was the answer. They cut up Carbutt’s sheets into narrow strips,  $\frac{1}{4}$ ” wide, carrying pictures  $\frac{1}{4}$ ” high. The joined material was not very suitable and Edison obtained from George Eastman the

new "Kodak" film, in 50 foot lengths. When Edison saw it, Dickson tells us, he said, "that's it—we've got it—now work like hell!"

By the Summer of 1899 a camera had been made using a sprocket wheel which drove the film through perforations along one edge. By 1890 the camera had changed, using film  $1\frac{1}{4}$ " (35mm) wide, and perforated down both edges. Primitive projection experiments were made in 1889, but Edison dropped this idea in favour of a peep-show viewer, which was introduced in 1893. On February 1st of this year the first film studio, nicknamed "the Black Maria," was put up and films were made of leading artists from every walk of life. The first Kinetoscope parlour was opened on April 14th 1894—the first public showing of the Edison moving pictures. The race that followed among other inventors to produce satisfactory projection equipment culminated in the introduction of cinematography proper, and the birth of the cinema.

Edison continued to develop other important inventions—the nickel-iron storage battery being one of the most important—while the organization he had created was imitated throughout American industry.

He died on October 18th 1931, after two months' illness, one of the most important men of his time.

A fascinating picture of Edison as a man emerges from this impressive biography. With no formal education, a distrust of theoretical science and mathematics, but an overwhelming desire to make things work, Edison tackled problems thought insoluble by his contemporaries. His brilliant concept of a research team was based upon a desire to solve *practical* problems. A new employee, asking what were the laboratory rules and regulations, was told by Edison, "Hell, there ain't no rules around here! We are tryin' to accomplish somet'n." This attitude led to many of his later discoveries, which were often made in the teeth of technical or financial opposition. It is astonishing that Edison was able to overcome his severe handicap of deafness—so much so that two of his major inventions were concerned with sound and hearing: the telephone microphone and the phonograph. He was frequently the centre of fierce financial battles between the developing, enormously powerful industrial trusts, but he still managed to retain his down-to-earth realism and good humour. After the total loss of millions of dollars spent on an ore mining process, he said, "Well, it's all gone, but we had a hell of a good time spending it."

Matthew Josephson's biography is well documented and is eminently readable. It disposes of many of the apocryphal stories and legends which inevitably arise around a great man, and illustrates not only Edison's life but the society in which he lived. The story of the invention of the Kinetograph camera occupies only 24 of the 511 pages, and does not contain anything previously unknown. However, this book can be confidently recommended to students of the history of the cinema, providing as it does a picture of the science, technology and industry out of which the motion picture was born.

BRIAN COE.



*Premier Plan*. General Editor: Bernard Chardère. Lyon: Société d'Etudes, de Recherches et de Documentation Cinématographique, 1960-61. 4.50 N.F. each (5.50 N.F. outside France). No. 13 *Luis Buñuel*; no. 14 *Jacques Prévert*; no. 15 *Michelangelo Antonioni*; no. 16 *Orson Welles*; no. 17 *Luchino Visconti*; no. 18 *Alain Resnais*.

It is not easy to define the scope and approach required for a satisfactory monograph. There are, however, four basic needs which should be met: (1) a reliable reference to the artist's work (full filmography); (2) a reliable reference to comment about the artist (full bibliography); (3) a reliable analysis of his aims and methods; (4) a reliable analysis of his achievement. Obviously, in the case of a prolific artist—Renoir, for example—nothing short of a full-length book could hope to fill this bill completely. Even with a director of limited output such as Bresson, the task is a difficult one. But within the limited scope available in its new, expanded format (approximately 90 pages, excluding illustrations), the *Premier Plan* series succeeds remarkably well.

The particular merit of the series is that each issue demonstrates that rare alliance: careful documentation combined with provocative analysis and criticism. The filmographies are excellent, painstakingly and accurately compiled (the omission of *Toute la mémoire du monde* from the list of Resnais' films is almost certainly due to a compiler's devil), containing variously complete credits, but all of them listing the basic necessities of producer, scenarist, camera, composer and principal actors—the latter not always with their rôles indicated. The Visconti volume usefully lists all his stage productions as well as his films, underlining the incompleteness of the Welles, which does not. Bibliographies are more difficult, for here choice can, and must, operate. Perhaps understandably, the series is accented heavily on France and Italy (the Buñuel bibliography is disarmingly headed "Bibliographie française abrégée," but space should have been found to list Vigo's brilliant analysis of *Un Chien Andalou*). Much of the best criticism is to be found, admittedly, in French and Italian periodicals: all the same, a wider lens would have helped. Curiously, and exceptionally, the Antonioni volume has no bibliography as such, contenting itself with quoting extracts from various articles, within the filmography.

Apart from the filmography and bibliography, each volume has as its basis a lengthy critical survey, occupying about half the volume. Here the series scores heavily; Bernard Chardère, the general editor, seems to have a genius for picking writers with enthusiasm for, wide knowledge of, and ability to penetrate, their subject. Perhaps one might ask for more clinical dissection when a director goes wrong (most directors' work is, inevitably, uneven). Freddy Buache, for example, in his study of Buñuel, quite rightly rehabilitates *La mort en ce jardin*, *Cela s'appelle l'aurore* and *La fièvre monte à El Pao* from the common accusation that these films are vulgar melodramas, and points out that each is, essentially, a rigorously revolutionary tract. But he fails to point out that in each case the rigorousness is invalidated in execution by the inability of actors like Georges Marchal, Gérard Philippe, Lucia Bosè and Maria Félix to achieve the sharp definition required in any Buñuel film. In the same way, Jean-Claude Allais overlooks the mannerism and lack of discipline which undercut Welles's later work. The weakest of the

introductory essays (also the shortest) is Bernard Pingaud's study of Alain Resnais, which concentrates on *what* Resnais is saying, to the exclusion of *how* he is saying it. The result is a fascinating examination of the memory theme which runs like an obsession through Resnais' work, but it leaves one with the impression that Resnais might be a novelist rather than a film director.

Following on the main essay, each monograph contains material of slightly varying nature. Interestingly, it is these variations which throw most light on how, or how not, to compile a monograph. The Buñuel volume takes a fairly simple approach, adding only some valuable biographical details about Buñuel's youth; a brilliant and revealing article by Buñuel himself, entitled "Poésie et Cinéma," being a highly personal manifesto; and the complete scenario of *Un Chien Andalou*. There is also an irrelevant account by J. P. le Chanois of *L'Age d'Or*, a film covered more efficiently by Buache. Otherwise the formula works excellently: Buache reveals what Buñuel has achieved and how he has done it, while Buñuel reveals what he wants to achieve, and confirms Buache. Paul-Louis Thirard's study of Antonioni is as good as Buache's, but this volume reveals how valuable a support (or scratching-post) Buñuel's own article was. Thirard's essay is followed by a couple of literary sketches and an unrealised scenario by Antonioni—interesting, but hardly significant—and an article by Antonioni, "Faire un film, c'est pour moi vivre," which, far from being a revelatory manifesto, serves rather to throw one of this director's scent. The result, unbalance.

Almost as successful as the Buñuel is the Visconti volume, despite the fact that its main essay, by Giulio Cesare Castello, is fractured in content by having been written in several parts from 1955-61, and reprinted here without apparently considering how the later Visconti (the stage production of *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, for example) throws light on the earlier (*La Terra Trema*). In this volume the main essay is followed by a selection of about twenty reviews, by various writers and reprinted from various periodicals, of Visconti's films and stage productions. Instead of being scrappy, this many-angled approach unexpectedly adds up to a precise picture of Visconti's talent. Unlike Buñuel, who has never deviated from a sharply-defined and single-minded artistic credo, Visconti, throughout his career, has been torn between contrary impulses—on the one hand a desire to produce socially responsible work, on the other a preoccupation with melodrama (in the operatic sense of the word); and between these two poles, a taste for indulging in pure spectacle. These three preoccupations are revealed, as they take the upper hand, in the reviews of *Ossessione*, *Senso*, and the stage production of *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* respectively; and, taken together, they throw considerable light on the stylish preciousness of *Notti Bianche*.

By comparison, the Orson Welles volume fails to penetrate, despite Jean-Claude Allais' interesting essay, and a fine piece by Bazin on Welles's use of cutting. Welles is as much a theatrical personality as a cinematic one, and his work in the cinema was always hampered by commercial exigencies. As he himself has remarked, *Citizen Kane* was the only film he has directed for which he had complete freedom. It could well be argued that a stage production like *Moby Dick* reveals as much of the essential Welles as all of his films. Allais, unfortunately, has obviously seen almost nothing of Welles's stage work, and a gap is left which is not filled in any other way.



The Resnais volume, again, is not wholly satisfactory. Having started on a too-literary basis with Pingaud's essay, it continues on the same path by publishing the replies to a questionnaire sent to several young French novelists. The idea, evidently, was based on a perception of the similarity of approach between Resnais and the "Nouveau Roman," as well as the fact that Resnais has collaborated with Duras, Robbe-Grillet and Cayrol. The replies reveal much of value about the "nouveau roman," but very little about Resnais. In addition—perhaps on the assumption that, with only two feature films in the can, Resnais has not a very hefty body of work to be discussed, so that some theory might be useful—the texts of several interviews with Resnais, from various publications, are given. They are interesting, but inevitably repetitive. And Resnais is a modest man, assuming less value in his work than is actually there, unwilling to take credit for bringing something new to the cinema—hence unable to comment on his own work with any real insight. The material is all present in the volume, ready for an analysis, but the analysis is not undertaken.

Prévert presents a slightly different problem. His writing has neither the complexity of structure nor the thematic importance of the work of Buñuel, Antonioni, Resnais, Visconti and Welles. Given this comparatively lightweight subject, Guy Jacob has sensibly set out to document and inform, rather than try to plumb non-existent depths. Details are amassed of Prévert's life and his projects, as well as his realised scripts, liberally sprinkled with synopses and samples of his writing. A picture begins to emerge of a writer, not of importance, but whom one should be wary of dismissing with a "charming, but . . .". During the thirties he was very active with the extreme leftist *Groupe d'Octobre*, whose performances shook many a political complacency; while his poetic, acid commentary to *Aubervilliers*, Elie Lotar's 1945 documentary on Parisian slums, reminds one that, given the freedom, Prévert can achieve a bite that Buñuel himself would not despise. The volume also provides two complete scenarios, *Baladar* and *Le Baron de Crac*. All the other monographs (excepting the Buñuel, with the complete *Chien Andalou*) give only extracts from the scenarios. While not actually harmful, and even mildly interesting, it is difficult to see what positive function—especially in the positive contexts provided by this admirable series—such extracts serve. Similar objection may be made to the use of stills, which are liberally supplied, but apparently chosen at random. A sequence of stills illustrating the scenario extracts would have been much more illuminating in every way.

TOM MILNE.

*Dal Soggetto al Film.* General Editor: Renzo Renzi. Milan: Cappelli, 1956+. 2,000 lire each, unless indicated to the contrary. A number of these are now available in French translation published in Paris by Editions Buchet-Chastel. No. 1 *Giulietta e Romeo* (R. Castellani); no. 2 *Senso* (L. Visconti); no. 3 *Guerra e Pace* (King Vidor); no. 4 *Il Tetto* (V. de Sica—1,500 lire); no. 5 *Le Notti di Cabiria* (F. Fellini); no. 6 *Le Notti Bianche* (L. Visconti); no. 7 *La Diga sul Pacifico* (R. Clément); no. 8 *Il Grido* (M. Antonioni); no. 9 *L'Uomo di Paglia* (P.

Germi); no. 10 *La Tempesta* (A. Lattuada); no. 11 *La Legge* (J. Dassin); no. 12 *La Grande Guerra* (M. Monicelli—1,800 lire); no. 13 *La Dolce Vita* (F. Fellini); no. 14 *Jovanka e le Altre* (M. Ritt); no. 15 *L'Avventura* (M. Antonioni); no. 16 *Era Notte a Roma* (R. Rossellini); no. 17 *Rocco e i Suoi Fratelli* (L. Visconti—2,200 lire).

It would not be too far-fetched to see these monographs as typical of present day Italian society. Though they are attractive in layout and glossy in presentation, their purpose—like so many other activities in Italy—is not immediately apparent. To whom are they directed for instance? At a pound apiece they must be beyond the pocket of most cinéastes, and their concern for detail must surely alienate the general public. Since Cappelli are still bringing them out however, one supposes they are bought for the magnificent series of stills (over a hundred in most volumes).

In each case the monographs begin with a critical essay. Critical? Well, perhaps one should qualify this, for the claims made in these essays are as deceptive as the glossy presentation. If there is content here it is well concealed, for these essays are more advertisements than evaluations. In the best Italian tradition we have pages upon pages of high-flown rhetoric which hardly bears examination. From them one might not unjustifiably deduce that the critical flame burns low in Italy now. Curiously enough, on a very low level, they do reflect the quality of the films discussed. Elio Bartolini on *Il Grido* makes some useful points on Antonioni's Romantic Ideology, as does the piece on *L'Avventura*; on the other hand, Tullio Kezich, on *La Dolce Vita*, is distinctly evasive and does not treat the film critically; perhaps as well. Most disappointing of all is Guido Aristarco's essay on *Rocco and His Brothers*. If one expects Italy's foremost critic to be unblinkered by Marxism, and to have judgment enough not to place Visconti on the level of Thomas Mann, Dostoyefsky, etc., then one is liable to be disappointed.

The essay is usually followed by a diary of production and one, perhaps two, versions of the script (with notes on the scenes later cut by the censor or by the director himself). This is generally the most valuable section of the book. The diaries for instance give us considerable insight—especially in the case of Visconti—into the way directors set about their work, and plot carefully the technical and administrative details of production. There is a leavening of gossip too, most of it pleasantly malicious. One of the least libellous stories tells of Fellini's attempt to winkle backing for *La Dolce Vita* from a recalcitrant producer who said he would rather eat blotting-paper than put money into that film, and when challenged did so.

Yet gossip is held in check and does not over-balance the admirable presentation of shooting scripts, which students will find permanently useful, and the more serious reporting. In present day Italy there may be much evasiveness and rhetoric, but there is also an interest in the cinema which puts us in Britain to shame. A few years ago Lindsay Anderson brought out a diary on *People of Tomorrow*: as far as I know this is the sole British work carried out in this field. One feels sad until one begins to wonder how many British films do deserve this detailed attention. Is it not a little like the case of the tramp who, when asked what he was about to eat, said that if he had bacon it would be bacon and eggs—if he had eggs?

ERIC RHODE.



*A Picture History of the Cinema* by Ernest Lindgren. London: Vista Books, 1960. 160 pp. 35s.

The appearance of Mr. Lindgren's new *Picture History of the Cinema* raises once more the question of the value of such publications. When we were little we looked at picture books because words had insufficient power to hold our attention. For adults, such a book either signifies an arrested state of verbal education or else must contain matter which can be conveyed more effectively or efficiently by means of pictures.

Into the first category goes the hotch-potch of illustrations, scrap-book like, with perhaps a chronological sequence to provide a semblance of order. The reader (or rather "viewer") glances idly at the pages with occasional exclamations of delight as he sees a well-loved or exciting image. It is mainly a pastime for a rainy Sunday afternoon, useful for visitors and children.

Art books come into the second group. The visual arts by their very nature rely on illustration, and whether the work is merely a bound portfolio of reproductions or has the mortar of a critical or historical text, the pictures are there to be referred to, the book is a work of reference and is valuable as such.

A picture book can also be valuable in the same way as a text book. Although it may consist mainly of pictures, their very arrangement and their accompanying text (if any) may have a meaning which could not be conveyed so vividly or precisely by means of words alone. This is especially so with the cinema. Being entirely a visual art, it is yet not adequately reproducible in still photographs. A collection of film stills has little value as such even if they are carefully chosen, for it is rarely that a single picture can sufficiently convey the spirit or style of a film in the way that even an inadequate reproduction of a painting can serve as a basis for critical discussion.

On the other hand, much of our understanding of films depends on our memory of sequences seen long ago, and if an important film has been missed we must perforce rely on the author's use of illustration temporarily to fill the gap. In this sense there is room for a picture book of the cinema. But to succeed it must be compiled with scrupulous care and the author must have a clear idea of what he is trying to do and say. He must choose his stills carefully and for a purpose. The pictures should be so arranged on the page that they are meaningful and enhance the meaning of each other. And the text, whether it carries the main weight of the thesis or merely links the photographs, must in its turn be chosen consciously for a purpose no matter whether it be merely an identification (in which case superfluous information should be omitted) or a statement of greater or less complexity.

There are many ways in which such a book might be compiled. It can take for each chapter a relatively limited subject—a director, or cameraman, a style, or a topic such as Terror or The Human Condition (as Nicole Vedrès does in *Images du Cinéma Français*), and depending on the skill with which the stills have been chosen a helpful aid to appreciation of the cinema results. Or at the other extreme, the photographs can illustrate individual points which are also made by a staccato text which is too autonomous to be caption and yet which is intimately linked with the picture. This is rare and is exemplified by *Der Film* by Georg Schmidt, which admittedly was

Germi); no. 10 *La Tempesta* (A. Lattuada); no. 11 *La Legge* (J. Dassin); no. 12 *La Grande Guerra* (M. Monicelli—1,800 lire); no. 13 *La Dolce Vita* (F. Fellini); no. 14 *Jovanka e le Altre* (M. Ritt); no. 15 *L'Avventura* (M. Antonioni); no. 16 *Era Notte a Roma* (R. Rossellini); no. 17 *Rocco e i Suoi Fratelli* (L. Visconti—2,200 lire).

It would not be too far-fetched to see these monographs as typical of present day Italian society. Though they are attractive in layout and glossy in presentation, their purpose—like so many other activities in Italy—is not immediately apparent. To whom are they directed for instance? At a pound apiece they must be beyond the pocket of most cinéastes, and their concern for detail must surely alienate the general public. Since Cappelli are still bringing them out however, one supposes they are bought for the magnificent series of stills (over a hundred in most volumes).

In each case the monographs begin with a critical essay. Critical? Well, perhaps one should qualify this, for the claims made in these essays are as deceptive as the glossy presentation. If there is content here it is well concealed, for these essays are more advertisements than evaluations. In the best Italian tradition we have pages upon pages of high-flown rhetoric which hardly bears examination. From them one might not unjustifiably deduce that the critical flame burns low in Italy now. Curiously enough, on a very low level, they do reflect the quality of the films discussed. Elio Bartolini on *Il Grido* makes some useful points on Antonioni's Romantic Ideology, as does the piece on *L'Avventura*; on the other hand, Tullio Kezich, on *La Dolce Vita*, is distinctly evasive and does not treat the film critically; perhaps as well. Most disappointing of all is Guido Aristarco's essay on *Rocco and His Brothers*. If one expects Italy's foremost critic to be unblinkered by Marxism, and to have judgment enough not to place Visconti on the level of Thomas Mann, Dostoyefsky, etc., then one is liable to be disappointed.

The essay is usually followed by a diary of production and one, perhaps two, versions of the script (with notes on the scenes later cut by the censor or by the director himself). This is generally the most valuable section of the book. The diaries for instance give us considerable insight—especially in the case of Visconti—into the way directors set about their work, and plot carefully the technical and administrative details of production. There is a leavening of gossip too, most of it pleasantly malicious. One of the least libellous stories tells of Fellini's attempt to winkle backing for *La Dolce Vita* from a recalcitrant producer who said he would rather eat blotting-paper than put money into that film, and when challenged did so.

Yet gossip is held in check and does not over-balance the admirable presentation of shooting scripts, which students will find permanently useful, and the more serious reporting. In present day Italy there may be much evasiveness and rhetoric, but there is also an interest in the cinema which puts us in Britain to shame. A few years ago Lindsay Anderson brought out a diary on *People of Tomorrow*: as far as I know this is the sole British work carried out in this field. One feels sad until one begins to wonder how many British films do deserve this detailed attention. Is it not a little like the case of the tramp who, when asked what he was about to eat, said that if he had bacon it would be bacon and eggs—if he had eggs?

ERIC RHODE.



*A Picture History of the Cinema* by Ernest Lindgren. London : Vista Books, 1960. 160 pp. 35s.

The appearance of Mr. Lindgren's new *Picture History of the Cinema* raises once more the question of the value of such publications. When we were little we looked at picture books because words had insufficient power to hold our attention. For adults, such a book either signifies an arrested state of verbal education or else must contain matter which can be conveyed more effectively or efficiently by means of pictures.

Into the first category goes the hotch-potch of illustrations, scrap-book like, with perhaps a chronological sequence to provide a semblance of order. The reader (or rather "viewer") glances idly at the pages with occasional exclamations of delight as he sees a well-loved or exciting image. It is mainly a pastime for a rainy Sunday afternoon, useful for visitors and children.

Art books come into the second group. The visual arts by their very nature rely on illustration, and whether the work is merely a bound portfolio of reproductions or has the mortar of a critical or historical text, the pictures are there to be referred to, the book is a work of reference and is valuable as such.

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based on a successful exhibition and derives its layout from the display techniques of exhibition galleries and architecture.

But what are we to make of a book which has pretensions to serious consideration, both in the eminence of its author and in his stated intention of presenting a survey of the history of the film as an art, and yet which fulfils none of these criteria?

The earlier chapters of *A Picture History of the Cinema* are the best. The relative paucity of material ensures that the illustrations illustrate and do not just stand as symbols of the films from which they are taken. But as soon as the 'twenties are reached the lack of a clear intention becomes apparent. Chapters group the films into chronological periods and within the chapters a rough segregation into countries is carried out. But even this is misleading, for the stills do not convey the spirit of a national school, or of a period, and an opportunity has been lost of graphically illustrating the interlinking by cross-influence of one school with another. Why, for instance, should the statue from *Le Sang d'un Poète* be isolated on a page next to *Westfront 1918* and two other Pabst films? Or *Film Ohne Titel* be tucked away quite swamped by *Monsieur Vincent* and *Le Diable au Corps*? To be fair, one should remark on the striking juxtaposition of stills from Russia, Denmark, Sweden, Germany and France on page 106, or of *On the Town* and *The Naked City* on pages 124 and 125. But these are rare and the lack of overall pattern is all too obvious.

One cannot criticise the actual stills in a book of this sort. Omissions are regretted. One welcomes with pleasure a scene from *Tora-no-O* and wonders at the sense of balance which spends three long lines enumerating the Japanese cast of *Seven Samurai* for no apparent reason. And one accepts as inevitable the fair ration of familiar stills.

In addition to the illustrations, each chapter is preceded by a couple of pages of text in which the particular period is quite skilfully, although necessarily superficially, summed up by the author. It is a pity to see the legend perpetuated (on page 67) that Al Jolson first spoke in *The Jazz Singer* when he sang "Mammy" to his mother towards the end of the film, instead of during the earlier scene when he is found singing jazz songs in a West Coast dive. But in general the text will be quite useful to a beginner and will perhaps cause him to explore the cinema a little further.

As an aid to film appreciation this book has its value, but as a history of the cinema it has unfortunately muffed too many of its opportunities.

N.M.H.